

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

TOWN HALL RENOVATIONS PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

April 15, 2015

Town Hall – Lower Level, Room L101

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Alan Bongiovanni at 5:31 PM.

II. Roll Call – Members present: Alan Bongiovanni, Chairperson; Jim Marocchini, Dave Nagel; Sarah Jorgensen-Bucchi; Rodney Mortensen; Alan Nafis; and Whit Przech. Others present: Members of the public; Chuck Boos and Nelson Bastos, Kaestle Boos Associates; Joe Desautel, Ed Moriarty, Tracy Brennan, and Mike MacDonald, Downes Construction Company; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.

III. Public Participation – None.

IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2015 meeting as presented. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Przech. The motion passed by a vote of 6 YES to 1 NO (Bongiovanni).

V. a. Previously discussed items - Hazardous materials report. Mr. Baron stated that a draft of EnviroMed's report had been received and reviewed by staff. EnviroMed was asked to amend the report to demonstrate the thoroughness of their investigation and to provide more than one cost estimate that would reflect some of the different options the Committee is currently considering.

V. b. Previously discussed items – Structural report. Mr. Boos informed the Committee that the mason would be on site on April 20<sup>th</sup>. The report should follow shortly thereafter.

V. c. Previously discussed items – Construction Manager contract amendments. Mr. Desautel gave Mr. Baron the proposed contract amendments, which in turn were distributed to the Committee members. They include a pre-referendum additional services fee of \$20,000 with a menu of five services within that item; a pre-referendum/pre-construction services fee of \$33,000; a Construction Manager's fee remaining at 1.68% of the cost of construction, but that would now convert to a fixed dollar amount when the Guaranteed Maximum Price is finalized; and a General Conditions amount that will be revised upon selection by the Committee of the final design option. Mr. Nafis asked if the \$33,000 fee was for services going forward. It is. Mr. Nagel asked if the pre-referendum additional services were for items that were not

accepted by the previous Project Building Committee. Those items had not been included in the original agreement with Downes Construction. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi suggested that the pre-referendum additional services be considered as alternate, optional services in the contract. Mr. Mortensen made a motion to accept the Amendment to Contract (AO 4.15.15) as provided by the Downes Construction Company, with the possibility of using Item A, Pre-Referendum Additional Services, on a to be determined basis by the Project Building Committee at a later date. A second to the motion was made by Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi. Discussion: Mr. Przech requested a breakdown of what was included in the Pre-construction services fee of \$33,000. Downes Construction Company agreed to supply that. The motion passed by a vote of 6 YES (Marocchini, Nagel, Jorgensen-Bucchi, Mortensen, Nafis and Bongiovanni) to 1 NO (Przech).

VI. Town Hall Conceptual Design – presented by Mr. Boos. This was a power point presentation showing the latest on an all new construction Town Hall concept. It began with a new building site plan. This showed the access road that was straightened to allow maximum parking. There is an access point off of Garfield Street to the shipping and receiving area. It allows for about 40 more parking spaces, the count going from 398 previously to 436 in this site plan. The new building Main Level was shown. Upon entry through the Main Entrance, citizens would have access to a stairway and two elevators. This floor would house the Town Council meeting room and numerous general government departments. The new building upper level would continue to have the Board of Education offices, as well as program space, the new Helen Nelson Room, a break room, and the Transition Academy. Mr. Mortensen asked if there would also be a break room space for general government staff on a lower level. Mr. Boos replied that there would. The new building Lower Level proposed layout was presented. Kaestle Boos Associates is considering relocating some of the mechanical storage space into the attic. The Lower Level has a north and a south block. The south block has Human Services, Newington Community Television, program space, Facilities, and a shipping/receiving area. The north block is for Parks and Recreation. It also shows space for a potential police department future two story expansion to address a records division access concern identified at a recent department head meeting.

Mr. Bongiovanni asked about access to Human Services and about their space. One would have go through the building or down stairs to access their space. Mr. Boos also said that this department has eight or nine multifunctional rooms. The department's needs were identified at about 4,600 square feet. This concept would include 4,900 square feet for Human Services. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi noted that Human Services was looking for a private entrance and access for patrons with shopping carts. Mr. Bongiovanni observed that perhaps the Human Services space could be swapped with the departments that were on the Main Level to allow for direct access to the side entrance. Continuing his presentation on the Lower Level, Mr. Boos pointed out that there would be a two stop elevator by the loading area to accommodate a six foot drop in grade. The shipping/receiving area would have access off of Garfield Street. Mr. Boos will do further work on the elevations in this area. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi observed that the shipping/receiving area might not be considered an attractive sight when viewed by those using Mill Pond Park. She asked if the spaces allocated were all the same size. Mr. Boos said that they were all the same as previously or slightly larger. He pointed out that this

layout gives more flexibility. Mr. Nagel inquired if the heights of the floors were different. They are: the Main Level and part of the Lower Level are at 16 feet and the Upper Level is at 14 feet.

Mr. Boos presented an East Elevation drawing, showing what the exterior of the building would look like. The rest of the building would be complimentary to that. A Building Section was presented, showing ceiling heights and vertical spatial relationships. Mr. Boos told the Committee that the gym area would support the 26 foot clearance needed for volleyball. Mr. Marocchini asked how far the gym space would extend into the lower parking lot. It would go as far back as the existing gym does now and extend as far as the Garfield Street setback line. A graphic was presented showing the percentage of the existing building that was devoted to circulation (18% of Town Hall and 21% of the Mortensen Community Center). This was compared to the percentage of square footage that would be used for circulation in an all new building (9% of Town Hall and 11% of Parks and Recreation). Lastly, a graphic presentation was shown depicting that 38% of the gross building area would have to be demolished to accommodate the changes of a renovated building as presented in earlier concepts. Mr. Przech asked about the square footage differential. The all new construction building would be about 108,000 square feet. Mr. Bongiovanni stated that the elevation drawing looked like a traditional Town Hall. Mr. Boos said that the Town Hall will be constructed like an office building. Construction is far more economical for the Community Center. That construction is simple, big box, slab on grade construction.

Mr. Przech asked if there would also be restrooms in the general government area of the Lower Level as well as in the Parks and Recreation block. There will, but they will not be to the same scale. Mr. Mortensen asked about parking and the Library's concern about the Transition Academy buses stopping traffic in the parking lot during student pickup and drop off. Mr. Boos responded that the drop off area space will be below the Main Entrance. This issue was looked at and addressed. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi observed that the building square footage went from 99,000 square feet when the new building concept was first discussed to 108,000 square feet on this evening's concept. Mr. Boos stated that the gyms had been tweaked a little bit. Also, the building storage now wrapped around the elevator bank. The storage space is about 6,000 square feet, and is basically unfinished space. Mr. Marocchini felt that this was space that could be sectioned off to accommodate storage needs for the Board of Education as well.

Mr. Bongiovanni noted that he would like to see Parks and Recreation's space better determined. He would like to know if, outside of the gyms, they are getting too much additional space. It is also possible that space in the Town Hall section can be tweaked. Mr. Mortensen noted that needs may change over time. Nothing in the building belongs to one segment. He likes the idea of flex space for when needs change. That space will get filled up. Every department knows that space will be flexible for future use. Ms. Jorgen-Bucchi felt that Mr. Mortensen's statement on flexibility ran counter to previous statements that the building should be designed for the long term. Mr. Nagel asked about the location of the Health Department. It is slotted to be in with the Building Department. Mr. Nagel reported that the Central Connecticut Health District is considering consolidation of their office space and potentially eliminating their satellite offices in the different Town Halls around the district, but that no decision had yet been reached on this. Mr. Boos noted that the corridors, the elevator and the stairs will have

the only fixed walls in the all new construction concept. This will provide flexibility for planning and result in planning efficiency. There could be modular furniture and gypsum board in areas that require privacy. There will be a need to be able to adapt mechanical systems. Mr. Mortensen asked about meeting rooms. Mr. Boos responded that they will be in this design, right off the corridor. Mr. Nagel asked about the space across from the gyms on the Lower Level, identified as Program Space, and whether it would be all purpose space or office space. Mr. Boos responded that all purpose space was a possibility. He went on to say that the Day Care Center was the only program space from the failed referendum project that doesn't work well at Town Hall. All the other Parks and Recreation functions should fit nicely.

Mr. Marocchini stated that the Committee basically has three plans and asked if the Committee wanted to start seeing cost estimates. Mr. Boos stated that the next step is to lay out spaces and to test them to see if they work, to ascertain if they can accommodate all the Town's functions within this area. Mr. Marocchini asked if Kaestle Boos Associates would do that for all three concepts. Mr. Boos responded that would depend on the concept numbers. There should be some savings in the hazardous material removal and there were other economies with the all new building concept also. If the plans are designed around inefficiencies at this point, those inefficiencies will be with the Town for the life of the building. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi noted that the Committee is still waiting on the hazardous materials and structural reports. Mr. Bongiovanni stated that he wanted more details on the all new building construction concept. Mr. Boos inquired what the price is for the project that will be supportable. That will drive a lot of decisions. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi felt that the Committee should listen to the suggestions provided by the focus groups that the Town paid for. She would like the Committee to look at those suggestions together. Mr. Przech asked if there were points from the focus groups that she felt were overlooked. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi responded that there were focus group comments about renovation and keeping the price down. Mr. Bongiovanni stated that he felt he was cognizant of what the issues raised by the focus groups were, and that he would review them again. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi felt that reviewing the comments from the focus groups was about listening to the people who will be paying for the building and respecting the people who live in town. Mr. Bongiovanni stated that the Committee had a charge to renovate the Town Hall to meet the needs of tomorrow and well out into the future. It will democratically select a plan and the Town Council will tell the Committee if they accept it. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi felt the Committee hasn't acknowledged looking at the focus groups' comments or having gone through their ideas.

Mr. Mortensen felt that everyone on the Committee read what the focus groups presented. He thinks it is unfair to say that people will never vote for the project. It is the people as a whole that will make the decision on what the Building Committee comes up with. The Building Committee needs to go forward in a positive manner. He is glad the Committee has the focus groups' information. The Committee has to look at the needs of the Town Hall. Nobody has been shut out. He is uneasy stating that the town won't go for a \$30 million dollar project. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi stated that there are other areas that also need money. The Committee needs to be conscientious. A number of taxpayers struggled when the last mill rate increase occurred. She is concerned. It is a tight situation in this town. She has a hard time seeing a \$30 million dollar project being approved based on the previous referendum vote. Mr. Nafis wondered if it was time for the

Committee to ask Downes Construction to put prices together. Chairperson Bongiovanni stated that more reports had to come in and that it was premature to ask for numbers. Mr. Przech stated that while 85% of the referendum voters voted against the proposal, the turnout was only 45% of the electorate. The building has been neglected while other projects have moved forward. Now other areas will have to wait. Mr. Nagel stated that the Committee needed to remain cognizant of the fact that members want the most efficient project to go to referendum. There may be some difference in opinion as to what is the most economical. Mr. Przech asked why there was no dollar amount identified for this project. Mr. Baron stated that it was because this was a referendum project. If it was a project in the Capital Improvement Plan, a budgeted amount would already be established. As the voters were being asked to approve the budget for the Town Hall project, the Building Committee would have to identify what it felt the level of spending should be and recommend that to the Town Council.

VII. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – Mr. Bongiovanni requested that Director of Facilities Management Dave Langdon make a staff report at the next meeting regarding his investigation into alternate locations for Town Hall operations in the event the building needs to be vacated. The Committee agreed to hold their next meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.

VIII. Public Participation –Anna Eddy, 41 Churchill Way and President of the Library Board of Trustees. She has been coming to Building Committee meetings for over two years and tonight she heard a comment from Mr. Boos that set her hair on end, specifically his statement that the additional parking was “everybody’s parking”. He should be careful about delineating property that is owned by the Library Board of Trustees. This is not a done deal. There is no formal agreement between the Trustees and the Town. It is premature to show that. The Trustees and the Town are still having conversations about the land. She doesn’t want the Building Committee to think it is everybody’s parking without an agreement. While there may be action for a building committee for the library on April 28<sup>th</sup>, there is no agreement on the land. It would have been nice if Kaestle Boos Associates had come to the library in advance. This has been a point of friction between the Trustees and Town officials.

Mady Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive. She has been away since February 16<sup>th</sup> and is looking to get up to speed. Tonight’s meeting is a reason to have department heads present. Karen Futoma should have been invited to the table when her department was being discussed. In the past deference has been paid primarily to one department. Deference should be paid to Human Services and their need for privacy. People are looking for input from the public. As a member of the public she is looking for color printouts of all handouts. The previous Building Committee had that. She does not want to have to print them off the computer after the fact. She also requests that the presenter use a laser. When schemes are presented it would be good to have an overlay of the present floor plan for reference purposes.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. She agrees with Mady’s comments. She has listened to the discussion on two gyms, one gym, and no budget having been decided on. She has heard the Mayor’s talk show where he said there would be two gyms and the project would cost \$30 million. These are two different messages. She read from the minutes of

the June 13, 2014 meeting pertaining to the pre-referendum suggestions of Mr. MacDonald of Downes Construction. Those things didn't happen. The project went to the Town Council and it failed at referendum. On items from the focus groups, are the plans, lists of fees, and the costs available to the public? She thanked Mr. Bongiovanni for asking for specifics on the Parks and Recreation space. She had told the Building Committee the land for additional parking belonged to the library. Not too many from the library came to speak out. It has all been a contradiction. There should be a master plan.

Don Woods, 82 Ivy Lane, Chairman of the Board of Parks and Recreation. He is pleased with the most recent plans shown tonight. As Mr. Boos has been asked to review Parks and Recreation's space, the Committee should be aware that the department is without a Superintendent, and may be without one for two to three months. He asks that the Board of Parks and Recreation be notified of any proposed significant changes. He sat through many meetings of the previous Committee. They were working hard, and hearing no outcry from the public. He sees this Committee doing the same thing: working hard, hearing no public outcry until the project is presented. The Building Committee members should be open minded and want this project to succeed. He encouraged the Committee to do the project and to do it right. You can't build something to appease a group of people who may never be happy.

IX. Response to Public Participation – Mr. Bongiovanni told Ms. Eddy that he may be partly to blame for the parking designation. He just wants to master plan parking on the campus. No offence was intended. The Committee needs to get an idea on how much parking the site can handle. Mr. Marocchini directed Mr. Boos to erase the library land that is designated for parking off of all plans. Mr. Nagel clarified a statement by Ms. Eddy about a Library Building Committee. The matter is on the Town Council's agenda for discussion only on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Nothing will be passed on that date, it will only be discussed. Mr. Bongiovanni replied to some of Ms. Kenny's comments. All department heads were involved at the appropriate time. The Committee can't have every department head at every meeting. Departments have and will continue to be consulted. The consultants were directed to bring extra copies of any handouts or presentations for the public to each meeting.

X. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jeff Baron*

Jeff Baron  
Director of Administrative Services